Ahom, Tea ethmic groups of Assam be rescheduled as Scheduled Tribes; and

(b) if so, by when Government would finalise the rescheduling of above said ethnic groups as STs and amend the Constitution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.
[Koch-Rajhonshis and Muttodh have been spelled as KOCH-RAJ-BONGSHI and MATAK by the Government of Assam]

(b) Process of revision of lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is on. However, no time frame can be given.

Old Age Pension to Persons from Backward Classes in Assam

602. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons provided with old age pension in Assam during the last three years i.e. 1997-98, 1998-99 and so far in 1999-2000 alongwith the details thereof;

(b) the number of persons from Backward Classes provided with old age pension by Government during the same period; and

(c) the frequency of distribution of old age pension and the amount dispersed, so far, separately during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) As reported by the Government of Assam number of persons provided with old age pension in Assam are 45,853, 1,00,136 and 47,710 during the years 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 (upto 2.12.1999) respectively. The details are given in the Annexure. [*See Appendix 188, Annexure No. 21*].

(b) No separate data is being maintained for Backward Classes.

(c) As per guidelines on National Social Assistance Programme, the benefit under National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) is to be disbursed, in not less than two instalments in a year and if possible, the benefit is disbursed in more instalments as per directions of the State Government. With regard to amounts disbursed so far,

Rs. 290.84 lakhs, 685.71 lakhs and Rs. 255.47 lakhs have been disbursed during the years 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 (as on 2.12.1999).

Revival Package for Loss Making SAIL

603. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have revised the revival package for loss making SAIL;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the subsidiaries of SAIL which suffered losses during the last three years;

(d) the reasons of losses in those subsidiaries and whether Government have contemplated any steps to bring down losses; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a), (b) and (e) Government has been in constant dialogue with SAIL and has been periodically reviewing its performance with a view to increasing its competitiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, to improve the financial performance and profitability of SAIL., the Company has drawn up a comprehensive financial and business restructuring plan. The measures outlined in the plan include, inter-alia:

(i) A reduction in operational costs by reducing input costs, reducing consumption of raw materials and other inputs and by increasing operating efficiencies;

(ii) Improvement in techno-economic parameters such as fuel and power consumption;

(iii) Increased recovery for services/facilitites;

(iv) Right sizing manpower through a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS);

(v) Assests restructuring;